

Message Text

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ACTION IO-10

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 AF-06 EA-09 EUR-12 NEA-10

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 SAB-01 AID-05 /120 W

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FM AMEMBASSY LIMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6587

INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

UNCLAS LIMA 7158

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PE

SUBJECT: NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE: PANAMANIAN MINISTER

COMMENTS ON TROOP MANEUVERS AND CANAL NEGOTIATIONS

REF: LIMA 7038

1. IN AN AUGUST 28 PRESS CONFERENCE, PANAMANIAN MINISTER JUAN TACK REJECTED U.S. EXPLANATIONS AND CHARACTERIZED TROOP MANEUVERS IN THE CANAL ZONE AS A "THREAT TO THE GOVERNMENT AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF PANAMA." HE SAID THE MANEUVERS WERE TIMED TO COINCIDE WITH THE OPENING OF THE NAC AND WERE AIMED AT DISCOURAGING PANAMA FROM JOINING THE NON-ALIGNED GROUP.

2. TACK SAID THAT TO CARRY OUT THE MANEUVERS, THE U.S. HAD AIRLIFTED ADDITIONAL TROOPS FROM FORT BRAGG, NORTH CAROLINA. IF THESE TROOPS ARE NOT WITHDRAWN, HE SAID, PANAMA HAS RECOURSE TO TWO DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVES: (A) BRING THE ISSUE UP IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL OF THE UN, OR (B) REQUEST A SPECIAL SESSION OF THE OAS UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE RIO TREATY. HE SAID THE MANEUVERS WOULD NOT BE A SUBJECT OF THE CANAL NEGOTIATIONS.

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3. TACK SAID THAT WHEN THE NEGOTIATIONS REOPEN ON SEPT. 4,

PANAMA WILL WANT TO DISCUSS PROVISIONS FOR "DEFENSE AND PROTECTION" OF THE CANAL. HE SAID THE U.S. NOW HAS 14 BASES IN THE ZONE. FOR NEGOTIATIONS TO PROCEED SMOOTHLY, THESE SHOULD BE REDUCED TO THREE, WHICH, WITHIN A SHORT PERIOD, MUST ALSO BE DISMANTLED. ASKED WHAT HE MEANT BY "SHORT", HE REPLIED THIS WOULD BE A SUBJECT FOR NEGOTIATION.

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